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Issue 76

# Head Start *Bulletin*

ENHANCING HEAD START COMMUNICATION

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## *Issue Pull-out in English & Spanish:*

Are You Ready for the NRS?

¿Están Listos para el NRS?

## Head Start Child Outcomes—

Setting the Context  
for the National  
Reporting System



**The *Head Start Bulletin* is published six times a year by the Head Start Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Department of Health and Human Services.**

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Tommy Thompson, Secretary

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
Wade F. Horn, Assistant Secretary

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Pamela Carter, Deputy Director

ADMINISTRATION ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES  
Joan E. Ohl, Commissioner

HEAD START BUREAU  
Windy M. Hill, Associate Commissioner

**The BULLETIN is a service of the Head Start Bureau. Its purpose is to enhance communication among the Head Start Bureau, Head Start programs, and interested national, regional, and state organizations and agencies.**

HEAD START BUREAU  
Carmen Bovell-Chester, Director, Division of Program Management  
JoAn Knight Herren, Chief, T/TA Branch  
Jeff Fredericks, Managing Editor

*Head Start Bulletin*

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Judy David, Editor  
FTK Media LLC, Production  
Aisha Mahy, Publications Coordinator

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Head Start Child Outcomes—Setting the Context for the National Reporting System  
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# Head Start Bulletin

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Head Start has a history of framing each new endeavor in a way that flows from its core values. by JoAn Knight Herren



# *Head Start Child Outcomes—* Setting the Context for the National Reporting System

**T**HE HEAD START PROGRAM HAS ALWAYS faced challenges and created innovations. Looking on from the University of Iowa in 1965, I witnessed a broadly comprehensive child development program in the making. Back then, who really understood the great move toward parent involvement? I also remember thinking, “Aides in the classroom...sounds like a good idea but what exactly does it mean?” These innovations, which may have seemed so novel or **overwhelming** at the time, are only distant memories now. So many other changes have been introduced—mainstreaming children with disabilities, *Program Performance Standards*, CDA, Early Head Start—and each was accepted and

integrated into Head Start services for children and families.

It seems that change never ends. For over 37 years and against some great odds, Head Start programs have miraculously adapted and adopted, forging ahead to improve the quality of services to the nation’s neediest children and families. Head Start has a history of framing each new endeavor in a way that is developmentally appropriate and that flows from its core values.

These values are reinforced in each and every article in this Bulletin on *Head Start Child Outcomes—Setting the Context for the National Reporting System*. The authors include Federal staff and T/TA providers. They have a long history with

online... For more information on Head Start, visit our site at [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb)



Head Start and are passionate about the program. Most recently, they have been involved in the early implementation associated with positive child outcomes and ongoing assessment efforts. These efforts are designed to strengthen Head Start as stated in President Bush's Early Childhood Initiative, *Good Start, Grow Smart*.

The Associate Commissioner Windy Hill's article, as well as the Assistant Secretary Wade Horn's message, are clear challenges to move Head Start into increased accountability in concert with sound child development principles. Tom Schultz, from the Head Start Bureau, writes with clarity and dedication about the approaches and processes used to develop this system. You will note that the focus groups included many grantee staff, T/TA providers, experts in the field, and Federal staff, all of whom reflect the values Head Start holds dear.

Jeff Hoffman helps us understand the systems needed to meet this goal of national accountability. His graphic depiction helps us further imagine how the systems inter-relate to support program quality.

Jim O'Brien discusses what the child outcomes and the National Reporting System mean for children with disabilities. Graciela Italiano-Thomas reminds us of our commitment to English Language Learners. Nanette Lofaro, from the Head Start Information and Publication Center, has prepared a gateway to electronic resources of print and media support.

The best news about developing an outcomes-oriented system is that we have many people working together in thoughtful, knowledgeable ways. When we share our ideas, concerns, and successes, as we have in this Bulletin, we all stand to benefit, including the Head Start children, their families, and their communities. As the President has indicated in his Initiative, the goal is to strengthen Head Start.

Enjoy this issue—it was designed for you! ■

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JoAn Knight Herren *is Chief, T/TA Branch, Head Start Bureau.*  
*T: 202-205-8566, E: [jherren@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:jherren@acf.hhs.gov).*



Reading can be a  
socially shared  
experience.



# IMPROVING HEAD START: A COMMON CAUSE

A common core of outcome measures will ensure that children in Head Start programs are succeeding. by Dr. Wade F. Horn

WADE F. HORN, PH.D., was named the Assistant Secretary for Children and Families in the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, on July 30, 2001. Prior to this appointment, Dr. Horn was President of the National Fatherhood Initiative, whose mission is to improve the well-being of children by increasing the number of children growing up with involved, committed, and responsible fathers in their lives.

From 1989-1993, Dr. Horn was the Commissioner for Children, Youth and Families and Chief of the Children's Bureau in the Administration on Children, Youth and Families. He also served as a Presidential appointee to the National Commission on Children from 1990-1993 and was a member of the National Commission on Childhood Disability from 1994-1995 and the U.S. Advisory Board on Welfare Indicators from 1996-1997. Prior to these appointments, Dr. Horn was the Director of Outpatient Psychological Services at the Children's Hospital National Medical Center in Washington, D.C., and an Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at George Washington University. From 1993 to 2001, Dr. Horn was also an adjunct faculty member at Georgetown University's Public Policy Institute and an affiliate scholar with the Hudson Institute. Dr. Horn's article previously appeared in *Children and Families*, Winter 2003.

President Bush has made managing for results a guiding principle of his Administration since its inception. In accordance with that principle, we are working to make sure that we measure the outcomes of our efforts, not merely the processes and procedures that make up each of our programs. In the end, the most important indicator of any program's efficacy is whether it is, in fact, helping the people it is intended to help. Nowhere is this truer than for Head Start.

Although the Head Start program has been shown to have many benefits for parents and children, we need to do

a better job of determining how well Head Start children across the country are being prepared for academic success once they enter school. In line with this, the President's *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative challenges us to improve the operational effectiveness of Head Start programs by developing a systematic, nationwide approach to assessing every child's school readiness.

The President's *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative challenges us to improve the operational effectiveness of Head Start programs by developing a systematic, nationwide approach to assessing every child's school readiness.

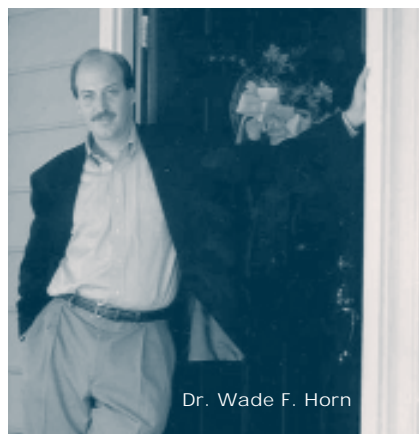
I believe that this initiative offers Head Start programs the opportunity both to showcase their achievements and to ensure that every child in Head Start develops the full range of skills he or she needs to succeed in school and in life.

To meet the President's challenges, we are pursuing several approaches. The first effort, STEP (Strategic Teacher Education Program), launched in Summer 2002, is a comprehensive professional development program aimed at training Head Start teachers and child care administrators in the latest research on how to enhance children's early literacy, language and math skills. STEP-trained teachers will return to their classrooms and become mentor-trainers for



their colleagues, creating an ever-widening circle of better-trained teachers.

Yet as vital as excellent training is for improving the Head Start program, it is not enough to stop there. To show our commitment to attaining positive outcomes for children,



Dr. Wade F. Horn

Photo courtesy of ACF.

we are instituting a new outcomes-oriented national reporting system. This system will employ a common, core set of measures that will allow us to determine whether or not the children that Head Start serves are developing the early literacy, language,

and math skills they need to be successful in school.

One of the strengths of the Head Start program is its local diversity, and we have no intention of diminishing the ability of local Head Start agencies to design programs to meet local needs. Local programs, for example, will be able to continue to use whatever curriculum and child-assessment systems they currently employ that are tailored for their community's unique needs. However, it is only by establishing a common core of outcome measures, administered by each Head Start program in the same way, that we will be able to evaluate how well all Head Start children are doing and help them do better.

In developing this outcomes-oriented system, we will include only reliable and valid measurement tools that have been thoroughly tested and that take into account cultural, socio-economic, and linguistic differences. Where no such reliable and valid measurement instruments exist, we will enlist the best researchers to develop and refine them before including them in the outcomes-oriented reporting system. The goal is to include only those assessment tools that are reliable and valid for use with economically disadvantaged four-year-old children.

Some have reacted to news of this approach with the

fear that we intend to use the national reporting system as a "pass-fail" test for grantees. This is just not the case. Rather, the purposes of the system are first, to help with educational planning, and second, to identify which programs may need additional training and technical assistance to achieve good outcomes for children. If a particular program is not achieving the kinds of results we all want for children enrolled in Head Start, the response will not be to de-fund the grantee, but to provide intensive assistance designed to increase the capacity of that program to help children achieve good outcomes. Of course, despite all our efforts, a particular program may be unable to produce good outcomes for its children. As prudent managers, we would take that into account along with other factors examined during our normal monitoring process. In some cases, we may determine that a different agency would be in a better position to deliver effective Head Start services. This approach is not a departure from procedures already in place to monitor how well grantees are performing.

I am also aware that some fear this system will become the equivalent of an entrance exam for kindergarten. Again, absolutely not. Yes, the information gathered by this system can—and should—be used to help children make the transition from Head Start to kindergarten. But it should never be used—and will not be used—to determine whether a child should be enrolled in kindergarten in the first place.

Recently, I was asked by a reporter when I anticipated we would start "de-funding" Head Start programs as a consequence of this new outcomes-oriented reporting system. My answer: I hope it will be never. That's because I am confident that this new outcomes-oriented system will be an effective tool in helping Head Start deliver quality services to children. Delivering quality services to economically disadvantaged children is what Head Start is all about. Working together, we will continue to do just that. ■

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Wade F. Horn *is the Assistant Secretary for the Administration for Children and Families.*



# THE NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM: WHAT IS IT AND HOW WILL IT WORK?

The National Reporting System is the next stage of child assessment, program improvement, and accountability in Head Start. by Windy M. Hill, Associate Commissioner of the Head Start Bureau

*A chart of the planets decorates the walls. "Let's go to Mercury," one boy says. "Venus!" exclaims another. The children climb the stairs to their space ship and count down, "Ten! Nine! Eight! Seven! Six! Five! Four! Three! Two! One! Blast off!" The children engage in highly verbal and interactive play, wearing soda-bottle air tanks, exploring both outer space and the inner space of their ship, discussing the effects of zero gravity, sorting moon rocks . . . One boy peers through a paper roll telescope and exclaims, "We're going to hit the moon! Turn right!" Another boy spins the steering wheel. The teacher observes, noting the wide range of Domain Elements reflected in the children's play.*

—from the Head Start video

*For a Child, Life is a Creative Adventure*

THE PROCESS OF OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT of children's progress is implemented throughout the program year, in various ways, in Head Starts across the country. The Head Start Program Performance Standards call for teachers to conduct ongoing assessments of all Head Start children. Since reauthorization of the Head Start Act in 1998, local programs have been required to analyze assessment information on children's progress three times a year. They must use this outcome information in both their program self-assessments and subsequent quality improvement efforts.

Programs have done an outstanding job in responding to these mandates and to other requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards. The time, energy, and resources that we have devoted in recent years to this effort have done a great deal to enhance the quality of Head Start services and are evident in some patterns of positive child outcomes.

The Head Start National Reporting System (NRS) adds one more component to complete this picture. In addition to the assessments that programs are currently undertaking, with instruments that are locally chosen, Head Start programs will

engage in a brief procedure at the beginning and end of the program year to assess all four- and five-year-olds on a limited set of language, literacy, and numeracy indicators. These indicators are predictive of children's later success in school, especially with reading. By using the same set of tools to collect information from every Head Start program, we will be able to document Head Start's effectiveness nationally in a new, valid, and reliable way. We will not report or examine individual child progress because that is best managed in local programs and in close partnership with parents.



Photo by A. Kaahani, Rosenmount HS.

Windy M. Hill enjoys reading aloud to Head Start children.

I know that there are questions about how the NRS will work and what programs need to do to implement this new system. Let me briefly comment on some of the most common areas of concern.

## Who Will Be Assessed?

STARTING IN FALL 2003, 4- AND 5-YEAR-OLDS in various program options will be assessed at the beginning and end of the program year. These assessments will document the benefits of Head



Start's comprehensive services on Congressionally-mandated child outcomes. It is important to understand that the NRS is not designed to track or report progress for individual children. Rather, we are interested in the overall progress that groups of children make in each Head Start program, in each region across the country.

### What Will Be Assessed and How?

THE NRS WILL FOCUS ON A LIMITED SET of literacy, language, and numeracy indicators as mandated by Congress in 1998. The sys-



Art activities reinforce language development, early literacy, and numeracy skills.

Photo by A. Willhoite. Action for E. Montana HS.

tem is designed for one-on-one assessment by local staff. The assessment will take approximately 15 minutes per child. Field testing was completed in Spring 2003 in 36 Head Start agencies to make sure that the NRS worked well for diverse types of children and program settings.

### How Will the Assessment Information Be Used?

INFORMATION FROM THE NRS will be reported back to programs to supplement their local child outcomes and program self-assessment information. Taken together, all of this information can be used by local programs in planning for children and ongoing quality improvement.

At the national level, the Head Start Bureau (HSB) will use NRS information in its program planning and implementation efforts. The Head Start Bureau and the Regional Offices will also use the information to guide training and technical assistance planning by identifying areas where programs may need additional support.

In addition, Federal work groups will use the information and experience gained during this first year of the NRS to plan additional ways of looking at child outcomes in future monitoring reviews.

### What About English Language Learners?

THE FIELD TESTING OF THE NRS INCLUDES a process for assessing children's acquisition of English. Assessment materials will be available in both English and Spanish. Work continues on the identification and/or development of items and procedures appropriate for children who speak other languages.

### Will the NRS Assessment Replace the Local Ongoing Assessment Process and Procedures?

NO. THE NRS WILL ENHANCE CURRENT SYSTEMS by providing additional information for programs to use in understanding the progress that groups of children are making in acquiring literacy, numeracy, and language skills. However, since the NRS will assess only 4- and 5-year-olds, and only on a limited set of indicators, the NRS information can only be supplemental to local assessment procedures and analysis of child outcomes. Programs will continue to use local comprehensive assessment systems and tools to respond to the Head Start Program Performance Standards and to meet local needs.

What the NRS offers that local program assessments do not is *comparability*. Because all programs will be using a common framework of measures and assessments, we will be able to draw valid and reliable conclusions about the progress that children in Head Start programs across the nation are making on select indicators. The common set of important indicators will also enhance our ability to aggregate and report data nationally the way programs do locally.

## How Can I Prepare My Program For NRS Implementation?

HERE ARE SOME GUIDELINES for local implementation of the NRS:

- Continue to improve program quality. Remember that the NRS, like all Head Start management and accountability systems, is one of several means to an end—the end is always higher quality services and more positive and lasting benefits for children and families. So continue your efforts to meet and exceed Program Performance Standards, apply best practices in all areas of program services and continue to strengthen curriculum, teaching practices, ongoing assessment, and learning opportunities in every center, classroom, home-based, and partnership setting.
- Make sure that staff carry out initial screening appropriately and in the required time frame (45 days).
- Assure ongoing assessment for each child and its use for curriculum planning, individualization, and communication with parents. Successful implementation of NRS will depend on the skills and capacities of staff to administer and utilize early childhood assessments in a quality fashion.
- Think about who will provide local leadership for the NRS. We are using a training-of-trainers strategy to prepare local lead staff in the NRS assessment and reporting procedures. Consider which people in your program could do the best job in carrying out this assignment and adjusting workloads and responsibilities if necessary to accommodate the additional leadership and oversight to successfully launch the NRS in your agency.
- Plan to provide time for staff training on the NRS prior to its implementation in Fall 2003.
- Stay informed. We will continue to communicate directly and through our ACF Regional Offices as we complete the development of the NRS. Refer to the ACYF-IM-HS-03-07—Head Start National Reporting System on Child Outcomes—issued on June 26, 2003 that is available at [www.headstartinfo.org/publications/im03/im03\\_07.htm](http://www.headstartinfo.org/publications/im03/im03_07.htm). The IM includes information on training, implementation, and financial support for NRC activities.

## Next Steps

NO ONE UNDERESTIMATES THE IMPORTANCE of this endeavor and what it means—not only for Head Start, but for the entire early childhood community. Ultimately, the success of the NRS depends on local leadership and the quality of implementation. We will do our part to make sure you have the knowledge and resources you need to implement the NRS effectively. We will also be counting on you to provide feedback that will help us to improve the system over time.

In closing, let me point out that the Head Start Bureau is continuing to design and invest in new efforts to help programs apply research, implement best practices, and improve outcomes for children in our diverse programs. The Strategic Teacher Education Program (STEP), through its regional and national training events and its Web-based resource STEP-Net, has played a major role in this effort. STEP has provided intensive and ongoing on-site program support to enhance teacher effectiveness in early literacy and language, social and emotional development, curriculum and assessment, and more. These improvement efforts go hand-in-hand with the National Reporting System. As the NRS develops more detailed and objective ways to measure and report on child outcomes, we will continue to ensure that Head Start programs have the support they need to improve outcomes for children and families.

Our initial work in developing the NRS in a little over a year is an example of Head Start's ability to accept any challenge. Our commitment ensures that we do whatever it takes to succeed. Success in effectively implementing the National Reporting System will help us to provide more extensive and credible evidence that Head Start works, program-by-program and community-by-community. It will also provide an additional management tool to ensure higher quality outcomes and enhanced opportunities for all Head Start children and families in the future.

I am deeply grateful to each of you for your commitment to providing quality services in Head Start. Thank you for your hard work on behalf of the Head Start communities you serve. ■

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Windy M. Hill *was named Associate Commissioner of the Head Start Bureau on January 7, 2002.*



# DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM

The Head Start Bureau has consulted with experts and Head Start leaders in developing and planning the NRS. by Tom Schultz

SINCE THE ANNOUNCEMENT of the National Reporting System (NRS) in the President's Early Childhood Initiative—*Good Start, Grow Smart*—in April 2002, the Head Start Bureau has been working to develop the best possible design for this important new effort.

The goal of this article is to explain the consultation, planning, and field test strategy which led to the NRS design for implementing the President's mandate and for strengthening the effectiveness and credibility of Head Start programs.

## Consulting with Experts and Practitioners

THE BUREAU CONVENED AND PARTICIPATED in an ongoing series of focus groups, workshops, and discussion sessions with leaders from local Head Start programs, early childhood researchers, and experts on assessment strategies for young children. These activities broadened our awareness of the strengths and limitations of currently available assessment tools, including those most commonly used in Head Start programs for ongoing assessment of

children, for indicators of school readiness, and for research on key program components. Issues and concerns around development of the NRS were shared. The

major events included:

May 2-3, 2002. Focus Group on Child Outcomes with 17 Head Start managers, national assessment experts, and Head Start Bureau staff.

June 17-18, 2002. Early Childhood Education and School Readiness Workshop: Conceptual Models, Constructs and Measures. This session was convened in collaboration with the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (HHS). Forty-eight experts, including representatives from several Head Start grantees involved in research partnership efforts, attended.

July 9, 2002. Discussion Session on the National Reporting System with 11 national experts and Federal staff from NICHD, ACF, and the Head Start Bureau.

December 16, 2002 and February 12, 2003. Technical Work Group meetings of 16 experts, co-chaired by Dr. Craig Ramey, Georgetown University, and Dr. Clancy Blair,



Children learn through repetition of important concepts during games, stories, and play.

Pennsylvania State University. The Technical Work Group provides ongoing advice and support to the Bureau as we complete the development and implementation of the NRS.

January 16, 2003. Associate Commissioner Windy M. Hill convened an invitational conference for Head Start and Early Head Start Directors to provide a comprehensive briefing on the status of planning and development of the NRS.

January 16 and 23, 2003. Focus Groups with 49 Head Start Directors and Managers discussed the NRS and its relationship to their local system for ongoing assessment, staff training, and local computer capability.

March 5, 2003. Language Diversity Group Meeting with six experts discussed strategies for assessment of non-English-speaking children in the NRS.

May 2, 2003. The Technical Work Group reviewed reports of the field testing and other work related to the NRS.

#### Reviewing Measures and Assessment Tools

THE HEAD START BUREAU is utilizing a variety of important criteria in selecting the child assessment measures for the NRS including:

- Focusing on skills and indicators that are important for predicting school readiness and success.
- Determining the technical quality of the instruments in terms of accuracy, validity, and reliability for measuring the progress of 4- and 5-year-old Head Start children.
- Determining the feasibility of implementing the assessment with approximately 500,000 children in various program options.
- Limiting the total time required to administer the assessment so that children and staff are not overly burdened.

Our first step in exploring child assessment options involved analyzing Program Information Report (PIR) data from 2001-2 on assessment tools currently in use. This effort revealed that programs are using 22 different assessment instruments and that more than 480 agencies are using locally developed tools or methods. Given the many assessment tools in use, it was determined that we could not create an NRS strategy based on data from current, ongoing assessments. Accordingly, a single uniform

#### PROGRAMS PARTICIPATING IN THE FIELD TEST FOR TRAINING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM (NRS)

Thirty-six Head Start programs were field-test sites for the NRS; 72 centers and 144 classrooms participated. Approximately 1,440 children, 4 years and older, were assessed. In 17 of the programs, at least one-fifth (20%) of the children were English language learners.

CITY	STATE
Akron	OH
Albuquerque	NM
Aliquippa	PA
Allentown	PA
Altadena	CA
Anchorage	AK
Atlanta	GA
Berlin	NH
Bridgeport	CT
Caguas	PR
Chicago	IL
Coshocton	OH
Detroit	MI
El Centro	CA
Elizabethton	TN
Fargo	ND
Fort Washakie	WY
Ft. Lauderdale	FL
Gillespie	IL
Grand Junction	CO
Hagerstown	MD
Hughesville	MD
Laredo	TX
Lubbock	TX
Nacogdoches	TX
Norfolk	VA
Plaquemine	LA
Richardson	TX
Roma	TX
Russellville	AR
San Antonio	TX
San Juan	PR
Seattle	WA
Sharon	PA
Springfield	MO
Window Rock	AZ



package of currently available assessments is being assembled to use in the NRS. This approach will allow the NRS information to be used effectively and for the intended purposes of designing and planning training and technical assistance efforts, augmenting existing assessment information used in decision-making about local curriculum and teaching strategies, and expanding the evidence of program effectiveness considered in Federal program monitoring reviews.

## The Head Start Bureau's commitment is to design and implement the NRS to benefit Head Start programs and the children and families we serve.

Next, based on the President's charge to the Bureau in the *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative and the bipartisan Congressional mandates in the 1998 reauthorization of the Head Start Act, the Bureau commissioned an analysis of the technical quality of existing assessment tools in the mandated areas of early literacy, language development and numeracy. This review included tools currently in use in major studies of Head Start children and programs (i.e., the Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES), the Head Start Impact Study, and the Head Start Quality Research Center Consortium). In its review of assessment materials, the Bureau also considered input from the various consultation sessions and from the Technical Work Group.

This process resulted in an initial set of measures to use in the NRS field test, including measures of the following five learning indicators as mandated by Congress in the Head Start Act in 1998:

- Understanding and using language to communicate for various purposes

- Using increasingly complex and varied vocabulary
- In the case of children whose native language is other than English, progressing toward acquisition of the English language
- Identifying at least 10 letters of the alphabet
- Numeracy awareness

While we recognize the value of collecting and reporting on a more comprehensive set of domains and indicators, limiting the scope of the initial version of the NRS is a prudent and manageable way to begin.

### Field Testing a Pilot NRS in Diverse Head Start Programs

DURING APRIL AND MAY 2003, a sample NRS was implemented in a diverse group of 36 local Head Start programs, including two Migrant and two Indian Head Start agencies. This effort is expected to provide valuable information on how the NRS design, materials, and reporting system work in the programs. Representatives from each program participated in a training-of-trainers session on the child assessment and reporting system procedures. These participants, in turn, trained teachers and/or other local staff to administer the child assessment and to record and enter the assessment information in the field test.

Staff from our NRS support contractors, Westat, Inc. and Xtria, Inc., observed and gathered feedback on the implementation efforts in each program. For a limited sample of children, contract staff carried out a second assessment as a check on how well the training design worked to prepare staff to carry out the assessment procedures in an accurate, consistent way. Information from the field test and feedback from staff and managers in field test sites is a crucial source of input for final decisions on the NRS design, policy decisions, program guidance, and implementation strategies.

In summary, we have successfully completed initial steps in developing the NRS, including several key decisions on the scope of the initial version of the system, the training proce-

*Continued on page 33*

# SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR THE NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM

HEAD START PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS provide a sound foundation for achieving positive child outcomes. Head Start is a comprehensive child development program that encompasses all aspects of a child's development and learning.

Upon entry to the program, each child receives required screenings to confirm that he or she is in good health and is developing well. This is the initial determination of a child's overall health status, developmental strengths, needs, and areas of identified concern, such as a possible serious delay or disability that may lead to a referral.

After screening, the requirements for child observation and ongoing assessment continue throughout the child's enrollment in Head Start. Using appropriate observation and assessment procedures, staff and parents follow each child's progress and experiences from his arrival in the program to the time he leaves. Through this process, they come to know each child's strengths, interests, needs, and learning styles in order to individualize the curriculum, to build on each child's prior knowledge and experiences, and to provide meaningful curriculum experiences that support learning and development. In these ways, staff, parents, and programs support each child in making progress toward stated goals.

Head Start's concern with the whole child, includes social competence as part of school readiness. Head Start grantees and delegate agencies gather information to document their process for assuring positive child outcomes. This information addresses all aspects of development and learning, including physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and language, in order to provide an overall picture of the child from program entry to the culmination of the child's Head Start experience.

This information gathered from observations and ongoing assessment also helps grantees respond to the need to address child outcomes: How has each child benefited from time in Head Start? In addition, child outcome information for groups of children becomes part of the data considered by grantees and delegate agencies as they engage in self-assessment to determine how the program is doing in meeting its goals and objectives, and in implementing the Head Start Program Performance Standards and other regulations. The results of the self-assessment contribute to continuous program planning and program improvement.

The Head Start National Reporting System (NRS) adds one more component to local child assessment and program self-assessment. Starting in Fall 2003, Head Start programs will implement a brief procedure at the beginning and end of the program year to assess all 4- and 5-year olds on a limited set of language, literacy, and numeracy outcomes that have been legislatively mandated. The NRS will provide comparable data about the progress that children are making in Head Start programs across the country. This information about groups of children, not individuals, will be reported back to programs to supplement their local assessments and used by the Federal and Regional Offices to guide training and technical assistance.

*(From The Head Start Path to Positive Child Outcomes, updated Summer 2003)*



# A Context for Head Start Child, Family, and Program

HEAD START PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND OTHER REGULATIONS  
45 CFR Parts 1301, 1302, 1303, 1304 and Guidance, 1305, 1306, and 1308 and Guidance

## HEAD START PROGRAM

### PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

"What are the minimum standards for the quality of Head Start services, staffing, and management systems?"

- Head Start Program Performance Standards provide quality standards for all aspects of early childhood development and health services, family and community partnerships, and program design and management.
- Qualified staff, in partnership with parents, select and adapt or develop a curriculum for each Head Start program. The curriculum is a written plan that addresses the goals for children and includes their experiences, appropriate materials, and the roles of staff and parents. Staff implement and individualize the curriculum to support each child's learning and developmental progress.
- Each program is required to implement a curriculum that promotes children's cognitive development and language skills, social and emotional development, and physical development.
- All programs must adhere to specific Program Performance Standards in the areas of group size, adult:child ratios, and staff qualifications, including ensuring that each classroom has a teacher with a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or its equivalent. The 1998 Head Start Act requires that by September 30, 2003, at least 50% of all Head Start teachers nationally in center-based programs have an associate, baccalaureate, or advanced degree in early education or in a related field with preschool teaching experience. Classroom teachers who do not meet this requirement must have a CDA or an equivalent State-issued certificate or be in the process of completing a CDA or degree within 180 days of hire.
- Families are to be involved through the family partnership agreement process in their children's development and learning, in increasing their own literacy and child observation skills, and in the governance process of the Head Start program.

## SCREENING AND ONGOING

### CHILD ASSESSMENT

"How do programs use information they gather on children?"

- Upon entry to Head Start, each child receives required screenings to determine the child's overall health status, developmental strengths, and needs. If a concern is identified, such as a possible serious delay or disability, a formal evaluation is conducted and a determination of eligibility for disability services is made. If the disability criteria are met, a plan for special education and/or related services is made.
- Staff and parents gather ongoing information to document children's progress toward positive child outcomes in language, literacy, mathematics, science, creative arts, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, and physical development, including the 13 mandated learning indicators (as described in the Child Outcomes Framework). Programs select, develop, or adapt an instrument or set of tools for ongoing assessment of children's progress that aligns with their curriculum.
- Child observation and ongoing assessment continue throughout the child's enrollment in Head Start. Staff and parents follow each child's progress, coming to know the child's strengths, interests, needs, and learning styles in order to individualize the curriculum, to build on each child's prior knowledge and experiences, and to provide meaningful curriculum experiences that support learning and development. In these ways, staff, parents, and programs support each child's progress toward stated goals.
- Child outcome information from groups of children becomes part of the data considered by agencies as they engage in self-assessment to determine how the program is meeting its goals and objectives and how it is implementing the Program Performance Standards and other regulations. The results of the self-assessment contribute to continuous program planning and program improvement.

## LOCAL PROGRAM SELF-ASSESSMENT

### AND ONGOING MONITORING

"How is the local program doing?"

- Grantees establish procedures for the ongoing monitoring of their own operations, as well as those of their delegate agencies, to ensure effective implementation of all Federal regulations.
- At least once a year, Early Head Start and Head Start agencies conduct a self-assessment to check how they are doing in meeting their goals and objectives and in implementing the Head Start Program Performance Standards and other regulations.
- The process involves the policy group, governing body, parents, staff, and the community.
- Grantees should ensure that their system for ongoing assessment of children includes collection of some data in each of the 8 Domains of children's learning and development. In addition, because they are legislatively mandated, programs must gather and analyze data on certain specific Domain Elements or Indicators or progress in language, literacy, and numeracy skills.
- Grantees must develop a system to analyze data on child outcomes that centers on patterns of progress for groups of children over time as they receive services through the program year. At a minimum, data analysis should compare progress beginning when children enter Head Start, at a mid-point in the program year, and when they complete the program year.
- The results of the self-assessment process, including the analysis of child outcomes, influence the agency's program planning and the continuous improvement process.

# Accomplishments and Outcomes

SYSTEMS AND OUTCOME MEASURES FOR HEAD START NATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY  
Head Start Act, ACYF-IM-HS-00-03, ACYF-IM-HS-00-18, ACYF-IM-HS-03-07, PRISM, FACES

## FEDERAL ON-SITE

### SYSTEMS MONITORING

"How is our compliance with Head Start regulations and program implementation?"

- After the first full year of operation, grantees are monitored at least once every three years.
- A review of effective management systems supports the implementation of a comprehensive child development program leading to positive child outcomes.
- A partnership between Federal and grantee staff monitors the progress of Early Head Start and Head Start grantees in implementing the Head Start Program Performance Standards and other Federal regulations.
- Using the PRISM (Program Review Instrument for Systems Monitoring), a team of Federal staff and other experts conducts an on-site PRISM review of grantee management systems and program quality through a combination of focus groups and individual interviews; observations; discussions with parents, staff, and policy groups; and review of written program documents. Grantees must correct all identified areas of noncompliance.
- Information from the PRISM, including compliance with the child outcomes requirements of the 1998 Head Start Act and ACYF-IM-HS-00-18, is to be used by grantees for continuous program improvement.

## NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM

"How are 4- and 5-year-old Head Start children progressing on a common national assessment of key indicators of literacy, language, and numeracy learning?"

- In April 2002, President Bush launched the Early Childhood Initiative—*Good Start, Grow Smart*—that included strengthening Head Start by developing a new accountability system to ensure that every Head Start program assesses child outcomes. This new accountability system is referred to as the National Reporting System (NRS).
- Starting in Fall 2003, all 4- and 5-year-olds in Head Start, including children with disabilities and English Language Learners, will be assessed through the NRS. They will be assessed again in the spring before they go to kindergarten.
- All Head Start programs will use a brief, common set of valid, reliable, age-appropriate assessment tools on specific language, literacy, and numeracy outcomes. The assessments will take approximately 15 minutes per child. They will be conducted in English or Spanish by trained program staff.
- The NRS will provide comparable data about the progress that children are making in each Head Start program. NRS information will be reported back to programs to supplement the ongoing child assessment and continuous program self-assessment that each program undertakes. The Head Start Bureau and the Regional Offices will use the NRS information to guide training and technical assistance and to develop new ways of incorporating outcomes into future PRISM reviews. Data on individual children will not be reported by the NRS.

## RESEARCH

"What are some key outcomes and indicators of national program quality, effectiveness, and outcomes?"

- The Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) is a national, longitudinal study to examine the quality and outcomes of Head Start. In 1997 and 2000, data were collected from a nationally representative sample of several thousand children in about 40 Head Start programs who were followed up in kindergarten. Teachers, staff, and parents were interviewed; observations of classroom quality were made. Results indicate that Head Start children's social skills improve and that they make more progress than the typical child their age on vocabulary and early writing measures, but still fall short of national averages. Classroom quality is linked to child outcomes. A new national sample is being launched in Fall 2003.
- The Head Start Impact Study is a Congressionally mandated longitudinal study of nearly 5,000 3- and 4-year-olds from a nationally representative sample of agencies. Children have been randomly assigned to Head Start or to a comparison group which does not receive Head Start services. Data collection includes direct child assessments through first grade, parent interviews, surveys with staff, observations of the quality of care settings, and teacher ratings. The study is designed to answer the mandated questions and benefit program quality.
- The Quality Research Centers (QRC) Consortium I (1995-2000) created partnerships among ACYF, Head Start grantees, and the academic research community to enhance quality program practices and outcomes. In 2001, a second cohort of QRCs was funded for five years to improve child outcomes in literacy, social and emotional development, and other domains of school readiness, through enhancements to curriculum, teacher training, parent involvement, and assessment practices. Research teams implement and evaluate their projects with their Head Start partners, then replicate them. Measures from FACES are used across sites.



# THE NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM AND HEAD START CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

To exclude children with disabilities from the NRS would reduce expectations and accountability for their progress. by Jim O'Brien

THE HEAD START NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM (NRS) will be a focus of attention this year as your staff and families learn more about its purpose and procedures and how NRS data will contribute to the continuous improvement of Head Start programs. As the NRS is introduced, programs will need to understand how it will relate to other Head Start program activities designed to collect information on child progress, including those used in identifying and serving children with disabilities and their families. This article should stimulate discussion and planning within your Head Start program about what the NRS will mean for children with disabilities and their families and the importance of clear communication with Head Start staff, families, and community partners.

The NRS will inform local program managers and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) about the progress groups of Head Start children make in the year prior to kindergarten on the skills and knowledge important to early school success.

What About Existing Screening and Assessment Practices?

THE NRS WILL NOT REPLACE SCREENING or ongoing assessment required by the Program Performance Standards. Your screening approach remains the first step in a systematic approach to identifying children who may need further evaluation to determine whether they have disabilities (see Figure 1). Your ongoing assessment of children provides the depth and context for making instructional decisions for individual children and groups of children. (For more information on this subject, refer to "How Screening and Assessment Practices Support Quality Disabilities Services in Head Start," *Head Start Bulletin*, April 2001, No. 70. [www.headstartinfo.org/publications/hsbulletin70/hsb70\\_07.htm](http://www.headstartinfo.org/publications/hsbulletin70/hsb70_07.htm))

The NRS is not expected to generate a child's profile or progress records for planning instruction or interventions for individual children. Rather, the information generated by the NRS will be used to understand the progress of groups of Head

Start children. It can be helpful in designing classroom and program level interventions to improve and sustain children's progress in certain areas just as the local outcomes process does in other areas. And, since children with disabilities are included in every Head Start program, a report on their progress should be included in the NRS results.

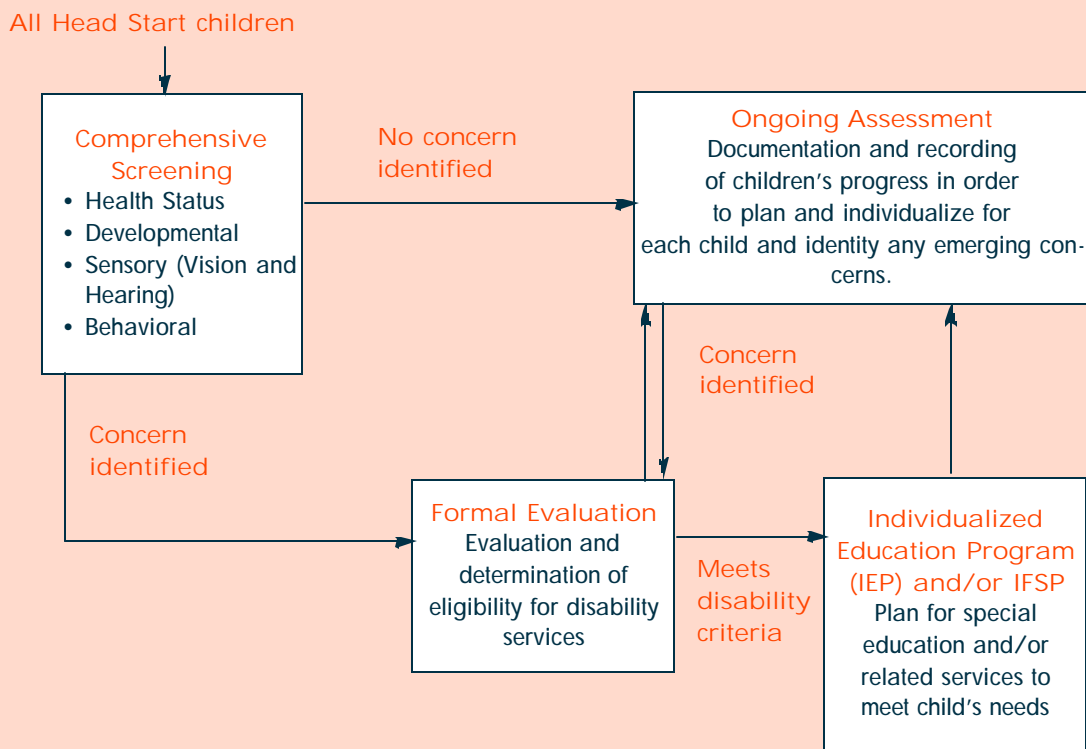
The NRS is being designed and field-tested to assure that, to the greatest extent possible, it can record progress for every Head Start child in the year prior to kindergarten enrollment, including more than 10% of Head Start children who have a disability. The commitment to include children with disabilities

Including children with disabilities in the NRS is consistent with the obligations of local education agency partners (LEAs) responsible for implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

in the NRS is consistent with the obligations of local education agency partners (LEAs) responsible for implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The Reauthorization of IDEA specifies that children with disabilities should be included in state and local efforts to measure educational outcomes for children. To exclude children with disabilities from these assessments would reduce expectations and accountability for their progress. Similarly in Head Start, efforts to report child progress include all children.

It is important to remember that most Head Start children with disabilities participate in the same learning experiences as

## THE SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS



their peers, receiving any additional supports they need to address the objectives in their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Therefore, it is appropriate that the NRS assessments provide children with disabilities the opportunity to display the progress they make during their Head Start experience. Information about the progress of groups of children with disabilities will help us understand how we are preparing them for early school success.

Some Head Start children with disabilities may, because of their disability, require appropriate modifications to participate in the NRS assessment. For example, a child with a vision impairment may need to use enlarged print materials to permit a valid assessment. Any such modification would follow guidelines provided by the NRS project. This attention to the standardized procedures helps assure that modifying the task does not significantly change the nature or difficulty of the item and that the measure of this child's progress is comparable to that reported for other children in the program.

Finally, there may be a few Head Start children with more

significant disabilities for whom some or all of the NRS battery could not be administered, even with appropriate modifications. An example might be a child with autism who has not yet developed the communication skills to complete the NRS assessment, even when appropriate modifications are provided such as more time for responses or frequent breaks. In such a case, where the NRS instrument would not permit a valid measure of progress, the NRS project will advise on an alternative means to record information on this child's progress. It is important to remember that for a child who may not complete the NRS assessment, their ongoing assessment, using methods appropriate to determine the child's progress on objectives contained in the IEP, will still be available to describe their progress.

It is important to emphasize that the introduction of the NRS cannot reduce your program's commitment to recruit and enroll children who most need the Head Start program, including children with significant disabilities. It would be inappropriate for a Head Start program to avoid enrolling any child

*Continued on page 33*



# THE NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The Head Start Bureau is committed to a fair and accurate assessment of child outcomes for all children. A Spanish version of the NRS has been developed. by Graciela Italiano-Thomas working with young children and families who are English language learners in Head Start and Early Head Start.

SINCE ITS INCEPTION, the Head Start Bureau has supported cultural and linguistic diversity among children and families. To this end, the Bureau has always supported the implementation of best practices to serve all children and families. These practices are in accordance with the 1998 Head Start Act and supported by the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. As the communities of children and families served in Head Start become increasingly more diverse, the Head Start Bureau has increased its efforts to improve the quality and responsiveness of services provided to children whose native language is other than English.

## Gathering Information

AN IMPORTANT STEP TOOK PLACE in October 2001 when a National Forum on Second Language Acquisition was convened by the Migrant and Seasonal Program Branch and its Training and Technical Assistance providers. The purpose was to support grantees in the delivery of educational services provided to the growing population of non-English speaking farm-worker children and families. A panel of educators, child development specialists, and local migrant program staff identified specific issues and needs in regard to first and second language acquisition. Based on the Forum’s proceedings, a technical paper was written that described the limited research available on the process of second language acquisition in the first five years of life.

To further its understanding of the cultural and linguistic diversity of Head Start children and families, the Head Start Bureau convened an English Language Learners Focus Group in April 2002. Parents, program staff, researchers, and experts in the fields of first and second language acquisition, bilingualism, and biculturalism were invited. The goal of this two-day meeting was to solicit specific recommendations regarding effective approaches to address the opportunities and challenges of


Linguistic Profile of Head Start Children  
OF THE MORE THAN 900,000 CHILDREN served by Head Start, approximately 27% speak a language other than English at home. More than 140 languages are represented in Head Start programs nationwide (see Linguistic Profile below).

Child Outcomes and Assessment  
THE HEAD START NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM Technical Work Group recognizes the great cultural and linguistic diversity represented in Head Start. The group has made a commitment to consider how the design and implementation of the Head Start National Reporting System (NRS) must be adapted to ensure that all children be fairly and adequately assessed. Members of the Technical Work Group have discussed their concerns, including the lack of availability of professionals who

## LINGUISTIC PROFILE OF HEAD START CHILDREN

According to the 2001-2002 Head Start Program Information Report (PIR), the dominant languages are:	
Spanish	217,217
Far Eastern Asian languages	11,427
Middle Eastern, Indic languages	6,222
Pacific Island languages	5,948
Native Central America, South American and Mexican languages	4,782
Caribbean languages	4,004
European and Slavic languages	3,942
African languages	3,002
Native North American or Alaska Native languages	1,796

can assess children in their home languages, assessment instruments that are not linguistically or culturally appropriate, and interpreters who are not properly trained in the screening process of the instrument.



Looking at books in small groups gives an important early literacy experience in Head Start.

The Technical Work Group convened a meeting among five nationally-recognized experts in the fields of early childhood, language acquisition, and assessment. Their input was invaluable in ensuring that the process of making decisions about English Language Learners within the context of the NRS is informed by research-based findings.

The Technical Work Group has been very responsive to all of these concerns. As a result, several important proposals were made, including—

- Parallel Spanish language assessment items, as well as English Language Acquisition items, be administered to children who are English Language Learners and whose home language is Spanish and

whose English-language proficiency is not sufficient for assessment in English.

- Instruments and protocols in other languages spoken by Head Start children be developed.

Such decisions represent Head Start's ongoing commitment to the diversity of children and families. Information on child outcomes for ALL children in Head Start, including English Language Learners, will be useful at both the local and national levels. ■

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Graciela Italiano-Thomas *is Senior Consultant, Education Services Branch, Head Start Bureau, and a member of the Technical Work Group.*

*T: 202-205-7359, E: gthomas@acf.hhs.gov.*

**Of the 900,000 children served by Head Start, approximately 27% speak a language other than English at home.**



# WHAT KIND OF QUESTIONS WILL CHILDREN BE ASKED ON THE NRS?

THE ASSESSMENT IS COMPOSED OF A SHORT SERIES OF ITEMS RELATED TO THE MANDATED OUTCOMES. The items are simple and interesting for preschoolers. There is an emphasis on tasks that relate to the acquisition of reading skills because reading is central to success in school and to later functioning in society. The assessment will take approximately 15 minutes per child. The items below are examples of the types of questions asked in the field test and in the full implementation of the NRS. They are not actual items from the NRS.

Children whose primary language is Spanish and who do not attain the cutoff score in the English version of the first two sections of the assessment, will be given a Spanish version of the assessment. Children whose primary language is Spanish and who do attain the cutoff score in English will be given both the English and Spanish versions of the assessment. Children whose primary language is other than English or Spanish and who do not attain the cutoff score in the English version will not be assessed at this time.

Additional information on the NRS may be obtained by contacting Tom Schultz, Head Start Bureau, E: [tschultz@acf.dhhs.gov](mailto:tschultz@acf.dhhs.gov); T: 202-205-8323.

VOCABULARY addresses child outcomes in language development. This task is to assess understanding of words representing parts of the human body or their functions, activities of daily living, emotions and feelings, work- or career-related activities, and plants, animals, and their habitats. The estimated administration time is 5 minutes.

Now, I want you to look at some pictures with me. I'm going to say some words. For each word I say, point to the picture that best shows what the word means. Let's try some.

SHOW THE PICTURES AND SAY:

See all the pictures on this page?

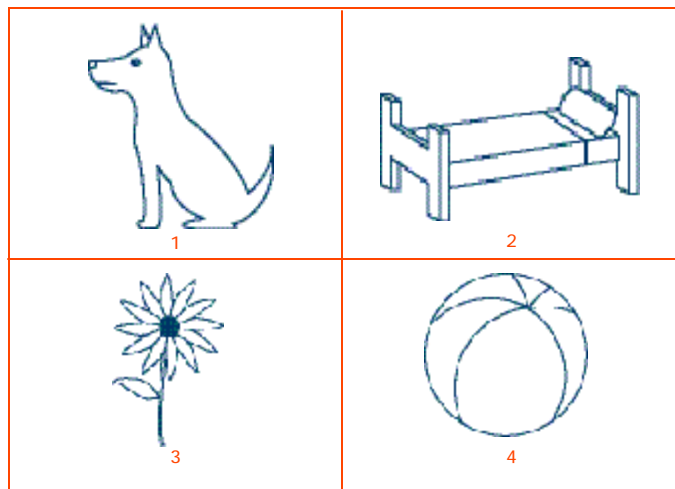
POINT TO EACH OF THE FOUR PICTURES AND SAY:

I will say something; then I want you to put your finger on the picture of what I have said. Let's try one. Put your finger on "ball."

IF THE CHILD RESPONDS CORRECTLY WITHOUT HELP BY POINTING TO THE BALL IN QUADRANT 4 SAY:

Good! Let's try another one. Put your finger on "dog."

(SEE GRAPHIC BELOW)

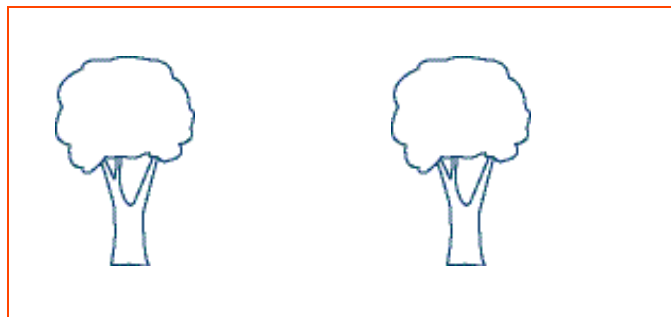


EARLY MATH addresses child outcomes in numbers and operations. The math skills assessed include recognizing one-digit numerals and basic geometric shapes, solving word problems involving counting or simple addition or subtraction, and interpreting simple measurements. The estimated administration time is 3 minutes.

How many trees are on this page?

CORRECT: TWO (NONVERBAL RESPONSES ARE ACCEPTABLE)

(SEE GRAPHIC BELOW)

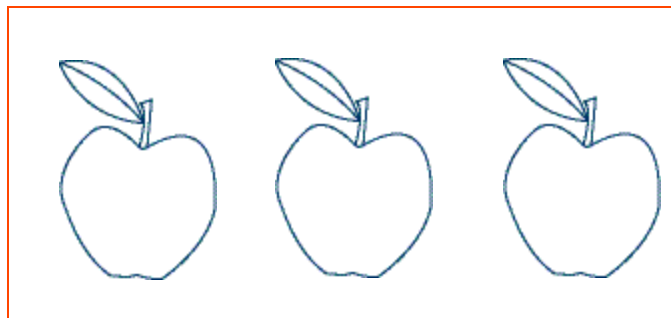


RUN YOUR FINGER ACROSS THE ITEM AND SAY:

If you gave a friend one of these apples, how many would you have left?

CORRECT: TWO (APPLES)

(SEE GRAPHIC BELOW)



# THE HEAD START CHILD OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

RELEASED IN 2000, THE HEAD START CHILD OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK is intended to guide Head Start programs in their curriculum planning and ongoing assessment of the progress and accomplishments of children. The Framework also is helpful to programs in their efforts to analyze and use data on child outcomes in program self-assessment and continuous improvement. The Framework is composed of 8 general Domains, 27 Domain Elements, and numerous examples of specific Indicators of children's skills, abilities, knowledge, and behaviors. The Framework is based on the Head Start Program Performance Standards, Head Start Program Performance Measures, provisions of the Head Start Act as amended in 1998, advice of the Head Start Bureau Technical Work Group on Child Outcomes, and a review of documents on assessment of young children and early childhood program accountability from a variety of state agencies and professional organizations.

- The Domains, Elements, and Indicators are presented as a framework of building blocks that are important for school success. The Framework is not an exhaustive list of everything a child should know or be able to do by the end of Head Start or entry into Kindergarten. The Framework is intended to guide assessment of 3- to 5-year-old children—not infants or toddlers enrolled in Early Head Start and not infants or toddlers in Migrant Head Start programs.
- The Framework guides agencies in selecting, developing, or adapting an instrument or set of tools for ongoing assessment of children's progress. It is inappropriate to use the Framework as a checklist for assessing children. It also is inappropriate to use items in the Framework in place of thoughtful curriculum planning and individualization.
- Every Head Start program implements an appropriate child assessment system that aligns with their curriculum and gathers data on children's progress in each of the 8 Domains of learning and development. At a minimum, because they are legislatively mandated, programs analyze data on 4 specific Domain Elements and 9 Indicators in various language, literacy, and numeracy skills, as indicated with a star ☆ in the chart. Local program child assessment occurs at least three times a year. The National Reporting System (NRS) child assessment includes measures of the mandated child outcomes.
- Information on children's progress on the Domains, Domain Elements, and Indicators is obtained from multiple sources, such as teacher and home visitor observations, analysis of samples of children's work and performance, parent reports, or direct assessment of children. Head Start assessment practices should reflect the assumption that children demonstrate progress over time in development and learning on a developmental continuum, in forms such as increasing frequency of a behavior or ability, increasing breadth or depth of knowledge and understanding, or increasing proficiency or independence in exercising a skill or ability.

*The English version of the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework was translated into Spanish by the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Quality Improvement Center. The Spanish version of the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework can be accessed at [www.mhsqic.org/spandocs/spandocs.htm](http://www.mhsqic.org/spandocs/spandocs.htm).*

(From *The Head Start Path to Positive Child Outcomes*, updated Summer 2003)



DOMAIN	DOMAIN ELEMENT	INDICATORS
LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT	Listening & Understanding	◆ Demonstrates increasing ability to attend to and understand conversations, stories, songs, and poems.
		◆ Shows progress in understanding and following simple and multiple-step directions.
		☆ <b>Understands an increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.</b>
		☆ <b>For non-English-speaking children, progresses in listening to and understanding English.</b>
	Speaking & Communicating	☆ <b>Develops increasing abilities to understand and use language to communicate information, experiences, ideas, feelings, opinions, needs, questions; and for other varied purposes.</b>
		◆ Progresses in abilities to initiate and respond appropriately in conversation and discussions with peers and adults.
		☆ <b>Uses an increasingly complex and varied spoken vocabulary.</b>
		◆ Progresses in clarity of pronunciation and towards speaking in sentences of increasing length and grammatical complexity.
LITERACY	☆ Phonological Awareness	◆ Shows increasing ability to discriminate and identify sounds in spoken language.
		◆ Shows growing awareness of beginning and ending sounds of words.
		◆ Progresses in recognizing matching sounds and rhymes in familiar words, games, songs, stories, and poems.
		◆ Shows growing ability to hear and discriminate separate syllables in words.
		☆ <b>Associates sounds with written words</b> , such as awareness that different words begin with the same sound.
	☆ Book Knowledge & Appreciation	◆ Shows growing interest and involvement in listening to and discussing a variety of fiction and non-fiction books and poetry.
		◆ Shows growing interest in reading-related activities, such as asking to have a favorite book read; choosing to look at books; drawing pictures based on stories; asking to take books home; going to the library; and engaging in pretend-reading with other children.
		◆ Demonstrates progress in abilities to retell and dictate stories from books and experiences; to act out stories in dramatic play; and to predict what will happen next in a story.
		◆ Progresses in learning how to handle and care for books; knowing to view one page at a time in sequence from front to back; and understanding that a book has a title, author, and illustrator.
	☆ Print Awareness & Concepts	◆ Shows increasing awareness of print in classroom, home, and community settings.
		◆ Develops growing understanding of the different functions of forms of print such as signs, letters, newspapers, lists, messages, and menus.
		◆ Demonstrates increasing awareness of concepts of print, such as that reading in English moves from top to bottom and from left to right, that speech can be written down, and that print conveys a message.
		◆ Shows progress in recognizing the association between spoken and written words by following print as it is read aloud.
		☆ <b>Recognizes a word as a unit of print</b> , or awareness that letters are grouped to form words, and that words are separated by spaces.

☆ *Indicates the 4 specific Domain Elements and 9 Indicators that are legislatively mandated.*

DOMAIN	DOMAIN ELEMENT	INDICATORS
LITERACY (CONT.)	Early Writing	◆ Develops understanding that writing is a way of communicating for a variety of purposes.
		◆ Begins to represent stories and experiences through pictures, dictation, and in play.
		◆ Experiments with a growing variety of writing tools and materials, such as pencils, crayons, and computers.
		◆ Progresses from using scribbles, shapes, or pictures to represent ideas, to using letter-like symbols, to copying or writing familiar words such as their own name.
	Alphabet Knowledge	◆ Shows progress in associating the names of letters with their shapes and sounds.
		◆ Increases in ability to notice the beginning letters in familiar words.
		☆ <b>Identifies at least 10 letters of the alphabet, especially those in their own name.</b>
		☆ <b>Knows that letters of the alphabet are a special category of visual graphics that can be individually named.</b>
MATHEMATICS	☆ Number & Operations	◆ Demonstrates increasing interest and awareness of numbers and counting as a means for solving problems and determining quantity.
		◆ Begins to associate number concepts, vocabulary, quantities, and written numerals in meaningful ways.
		◆ Develops increasing ability to count in sequence to 10 and beyond.
		◆ Begins to make use of one-to-one correspondence in counting objects and matching groups of objects.
		◆ Begins to use language to compare numbers of objects with terms such as more, less, greater than, fewer, equal to.
		◆ Develops increased abilities to combine, separate and name “how many” concrete objects.
	Geometry & Spatial Sense	◆ Begins to recognize, describe, compare, and name common shapes, their parts and attributes.
		◆ Progresses in ability to put together and take apart shapes.
		◆ Begins to be able to determine whether or not two shapes are the same size and shape.
		◆ Shows growth in matching, sorting, putting in a series, and regrouping objects according to one or two attributes such as color, shape, or size.
	Patterns & Measurement	◆ Builds an increasing understanding of directionality, order, and positions of objects, and words such as up, down, over, under, top, bottom, inside, outside, in front, and behind.
		◆ Enhances abilities to recognize, duplicate, and extend simple patterns using a variety of materials.
		◆ Shows increasing abilities to match, sort, put in a series, and regroup objects according to one or two attributes such as shape or size.
		◆ Begins to make comparisons between several objects based on a single attribute.
		◆ Shows progress in using standard and non-standard measures for length and area of objects.
SCIENCE	Scientific Skills & Methods	◆ Begins to use senses and a variety of tools and simple measuring devices to gather information, investigate materials, and observe processes and relationships.
		◆ Develops increased ability to observe and discuss common properties, differences and comparisons among objects and materials.
		◆ Begins to participate in simple investigations to test observations, discuss and draw conclusions, and form generalizations.
		◆ Develops growing abilities to collect, describe, and record information through a variety of means, including discussion, drawings, maps, and charts.
		◆ Begins to describe and discuss predictions, explanations, and generalizations based on past experiences.

☆ *Indicates the 4 specific Domain Elements and 9 Indicators that are legislatively mandated.*

DOMAIN	DOMAIN ELEMENT	INDICATORS
SCIENCE (CONT.)	Scientific Knowledge	◆ Expands knowledge of and abilities to observe, describe, and discuss the natural world, materials, living things, and natural processes.
		◆ Expands knowledge of and respect for their bodies and the environment.
		◆ Develops growing awareness of ideas and language related to attributes of time and temperature.
		◆ Shows increased awareness and beginning understanding of changes in materials and cause-effect relationships.
CREATIVE ARTS	Music	◆ Participates with increasing interest and enjoyment in a variety of music activities, including listening, singing, finger plays, games, and performances.
		◆ Experiments with a variety of musical instruments.
	Art	◆ Gains ability in using different art media and materials in a variety of ways for creative expression and representation.
		◆ Progresses in abilities to create drawings, paintings, models, and other art creations that are more detailed, creative, or realistic.
		◆ Develops growing abilities to plan, work independently, and demonstrate care and persistence in a variety of art projects.
		◆ Begins to understand and share opinions about artistic products and experiences.
	Movement	◆ Expresses through movement and dancing what is felt and heard in various musical tempos and styles.
		◆ Shows growth in moving in time to different patterns of beat and rhythm in music.
	Dramatic Play	◆ Participates in a variety of dramatic play activities that become more extended and complex.
		◆ Shows growing creativity and imagination in using materials and in assuming different roles in dramatic play situations.
SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Self-Concept	◆ Begins to develop and express awareness of self in terms of specific abilities, characteristics, and preferences.
		◆ Develops growing capacity for independence in a range of activities, routines, and tasks.
		◆ Demonstrates growing confidence in a range of abilities and expresses pride in accomplishments.
	Self-Control	◆ Shows progress in expressing feelings, needs, and opinions in difficult situations and conflicts without harming themselves, others, or property.
		◆ Develops growing understanding of how their actions affect others and begins to accept the consequences of their actions.
		◆ Demonstrates increasing capacity to follow rules and routines and use materials purposefully, safely, and respectfully.
	Cooperation	◆ Increases abilities to sustain interactions with peers by helping, sharing, and discussion.
		◆ Shows increasing abilities to use compromise and discussion in working, playing, and resolving conflicts with peers.
		◆ Develops increasing abilities to give and take in interactions; to take turns in games or using materials; and to interact without being overly submissive or directive.

☆ Indicates the 4 specific Domain Elements and 9 Indicators that are legislatively mandated.



DOMAIN	DOMAIN ELEMENT	INDICATORS
SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CONT.)	Social Relationships	◆ Demonstrates increasing comfort in talking with and accepting guidance and directions from a range of familiar adults.
		◆ Shows progress in developing friendships with peers.
		◆ Progresses in responding sympathetically to peers who are in need, upset, hurt, or angry; and in expressing empathy or caring for others.
	Knowledge of Families & Communities	◆ Develops ability to identify personal characteristics, including gender and family composition.
		◆ Progresses in understanding similarities and respecting differences among people, such as genders, race, special needs, culture, language, and family structures.
		◆ Develops growing awareness of jobs and what is required to perform them.
APPROACHES TO LEARNING	Initiative & Curiosity	◆ Begins to express and understand concepts and language of geography in the contexts of the classroom, home, and community.
		◆ Chooses to participate in an increasing variety of tasks and activities.
		◆ Develops increased ability to make independent choices.
		◆ Approaches tasks and activities with increased flexibility, imagination, and inventiveness.
	Engagement & Persistence	◆ Grows in eagerness to learn about and discuss a growing range of topics, ideas, and tasks.
		◆ Grows in abilities to persist in and complete a variety of tasks, activities, projects, and experiences.
		◆ Demonstrates increasing ability to set goals and develop and follow through on plans.
	Reasoning & Problem Solving	◆ Shows growing capacity to maintain concentration over time on a task, question, set of directions or interactions, despite distractions and interruptions.
		◆ Develops increasing ability to find more than one solution to a question, task, or problem.
		◆ Grows in recognizing and solving problems through active exploration, including trial and error, and interactions and discussions with peers and adults.
PHYSICAL HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT	Gross Motor Skills	◆ Develops increasing abilities to classify, compare and contrast objects, events, and experiences.
		◆ Shows increasing levels of proficiency, control, and balance in walking, climbing, running, jumping, hopping, skipping, marching, and galloping.
	Fine Motor Skills	◆ Demonstrates increasing abilities to coordinate movements in throwing, catching, kicking, bouncing balls, and using the slide and swing.
		◆ Develops growing strength, dexterity, and control needed to use tools such as scissors, paper punch, stapler, and hammer.
		◆ Grows in hand-eye coordination in building with blocks, putting together puzzles, reproducing shapes and patterns, stringing beads, and using scissors.
	Health Status & Practices	◆ Progresses in abilities to use writing, drawing, and art tools, including pencils, markers, chalk, paint brushes, and various types of technology.
		◆ Progresses in physical growth, strength, stamina, and flexibility.
		◆ Participates actively in games, outdoor play, and other forms of exercise that enhance physical fitness.
		◆ Shows growing independence in hygiene, nutrition, and personal care when eating, dressing, washing hands, brushing teeth, and toileting.
		◆ Builds awareness and ability to follow basic health and safety rules such as fire safety, traffic and pedestrian safety, and responding appropriately to potentially harmful objects, substances, and activities.

☆ Indicates the 4 specific Domain Elements and 9 Indicators that are legislatively mandated.

# HOW CHILD OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT SUPPORTS CONTINUOUS PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

Child outcomes has created a powerful mechanism for Head Start programs to continuously improve. by Jeff Hoffman and JoAn Knight Herren

“OUTCOMES ARE SIMPLY A STATEMENT of where we are...not good or bad. What happens next?” The child outcomes system, one of the Head Start mechanisms to increase the quality of services to children and their families, is having a profound effect on the way Head Start programs view the work they have done and plan the work they will do. Outcome information allows programs to make the subtle, yet powerful, shift from focusing primarily on the activities that have been completed to focusing on the results of those activities. Documentation and reporting of the level of effort continues to be important. However, the addition of child outcomes as part of the continuous improvement process guides programs to ask, “So what?” As a result of the investment of resources, have we made a difference in the lives of their children we serve? What are the benefits they have gained? What knowledge? What skills? What attitudes?

Beginning in 2000, the pilot year for implementing a child outcomes system, an emphasis was placed on two assessment areas in Head Start: child assessment and self-assessment. As stated in ACYF IM-HS-00-18, Head Start programs are required to look at the effectiveness of the process by which each child’s comprehensive development is assessed as well as the annual process by which programs reflect on the effectiveness of their services and support systems. Furthermore, programs have been required to link the two systems.

As with any system that is composed of a number of interlocking and interacting parts, the linkage of the child assessment process and self-assessment is not isolated from the remainder of the program. Other services and systems that are closely linked, and therefore are impacted most by child outcomes, include curriculum, record keeping, reporting, on-going monitoring, and planning. A key thread throughout all of these services and systems is the capacity of the program to manage information effectively and efficiently and to use it to make informed decisions.

Using the Continuous Improvement Cycle

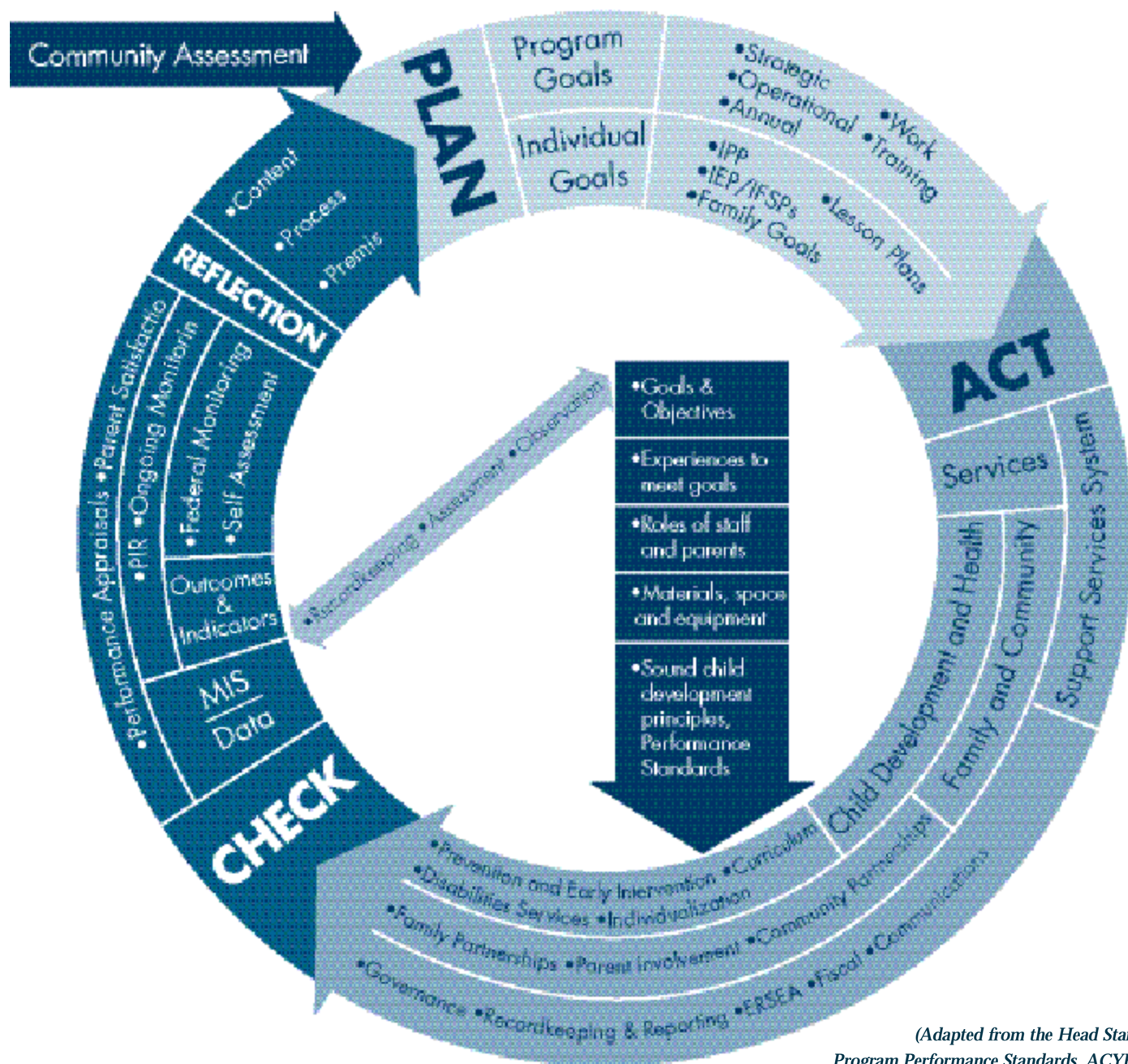
AS ILLUSTRATED in the Head Start Child Outcomes Continuous

Improvement Cycle (see Figure 1), planning is a key initial aspect of the work done in Head Start. Short- and long-term plans are developed for those served—the children and their families—and for the program itself. All Head Start services and the organizational systems that support those services comprise a portion of the cycle involved with activities. Put simply—what is being done with resources to fulfill the mission of Head Start? Planning for activities and actually doing the activities are critical but not sufficient for change to occur.

The final portion of the continuous improvement cycle focuses on answering the question, “Are we doing what we said we would do and did those activities actually make positive differences to those we serve?” By comparing what we planned to do with what we actually did and then comparing all children’s progress in the eight domains of child development throughout the year, we address a critical aspect of the continuous improvement cycle—analysis of the information we have gathered. A number of systems are in place that provide a review of a program’s work such as performance appraisals of staff, parent satisfaction questionnaires, the Program Information Report (PIR), Federal monitoring, and self assessment.

Objectively evaluating the gaps between the plans, the actual accomplishments, and the degree of children’s progress during their Head Start experience brings us to the point of reflecting about the self-assessment results. The three levels of reflection are content, process, and premise. Content reflection involves focusing on what has been done. Process reflection examines how these activities have been done and the efficacy in performing them. Premise reflection increases awareness of why these particular activities were done in a certain manner. (Mezirow and Associates 2000)

Like all systems, continuous improvement is cyclical in nature. The activities and experiences during the previous year and the learning and wisdom gained through the self-assessment, analysis, and reflective processes serve to better inform the next planning process. The third assessment required of Head Start programs, the community assessment, is also a sig-



(Adapted from the Head Start Program Performance Standards, ACYF-IM-0018-18, and PRISM 2003.)

Figure 1

nificant influence in the planning process. It focuses on whether the program is being responsive to the needs of the participants—the eligible children and their families.

An integral part of the outcomes paradigm is the development of a logic model, linking certain activities with certain results. Coupling the results of the program's child outcomes

with current research findings, each program must ask several questions during the initial part of the planning process: What do we need to keep doing? What do we need to do more of? Less of? What do we need to add? What do we need to stop doing? What do we need to modify in some way?

The child outcomes initiative has created a powerful



## Regulatory Foundations for the Continuous Improvement Cycle

## Head Start Program Performance Standards

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1304.51(a)(1)               | Systematic, ongoing program planning process—   |
| 1304.51(a)(1)(i) and 1305.3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• community assessment</li> </ul>  |
| 1304.51(a)(1)(ii)           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• goals and objectives consistent with community assessment, EHS/HS philosophy, self-assessment results</li> </ul> |
| 1304.51(a)(1)(iii)          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• written plans</li> </ul>   |

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| 1304.51(g) | Efficient, effective record-keeping systems |
|------------|---|

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 1304.51(h)    | Efficient, effective reporting systems—   |
| 1304.51(h)(1) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• control quality</li> <li>• maintain accountability</li> <li>• advise governing bodies and staff</li> </ul> |

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 1304.51(i)    | Program self-assessment and monitoring the effectiveness and progress—   |
| 1304.51(i)(1) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in meeting goals and objectives</li> <li>• in implementing Federal regulations</li> </ul> |

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 1304.51(i)(2) | Establish and implement ongoing monitoring procedures |
|---------------|---|

ACYF-IM-HS-00-18

## Purpose—

steps for incorporating child outcomes in self-assessment resources on outcomes-based self-assessment

## Goals—

- enhance self-assessment and continuous improvement by incorporating outcomes data
- improve and connect child assessment and self-assessment systems

Objectives include incorporating child outcome data into self-assessment and continuous improvement process.

## Step 7—Incorporating child outcome data

Data analysis on patterns of child outcomes incorporated into self-assessment system reported to staff and governing bodies

## Data considered in conjunction with other self-assessment findings—

- planning for program improvements (training, mentoring, supervision)
- improvement in curriculum
- reallocation of resources
- involvement of volunteers and partners
- supporting families in enhancing learning and development
- planning for transitions into elementary schools

mechanism for Head Start programs to continuously improve the quality of their services to children and their families. It insures that the curriculum is enhancing and supporting each child's development in all domains and that the ongoing child assessment process provides useful measures of each child's development. In addition, the effectiveness of the planning, record-keeping, reporting, information management, and self-assessment systems continues to improve in order to better support the child outcomes system and to respond to the information provided by the data and its analysis. ■

## REFERENCES

Mezirow, J. & Associates. 2000. *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Jeff Hoffman is Nebraska State Liaison, Community Development Institute/Head Start Quality Improvement Center, Region VII.

T: 402-484-0265, E:

JefKHoffman@cs.com.

JoAn Knight Herren is Chief, T/TA Branch, Head Start Bureau.

T: 202-205-8566,

E: jherren@acf.hhs.gov.

## ARE YOU READY FOR THE NRS?

**Take a look at these items and think about the status of your program and its readiness for the National Reporting System. Programs are likely to be at different points. For those items you've marked "in progress" or "not yet," continue to work on them! Be sure to celebrate your "definite" achievements!** by Michele Plutro

	Definitely In progress Not yet		Definitely In progress Not yet
We use a comprehensive, written curriculum as defined in the Head Start Program Performance Standards, and we...	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	three times a year in order to look at the progress of groups of children and at the progress and outcomes program-wide	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
– effectively implement the curriculum in daily practice	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	– study and analyze evidence from all sources as part of our program self-assessment process	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
– include learning experiences designed to support the eight developmental domains of the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework, including the 13 Congressionally mandated early language, literacy, and math outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	– use the information from our local child assessment of outcomes and from our program self-assessment to improve our program	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
– inform other staff and parents about the curriculum goals and approach	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	– share “how our children are doing” reports with staff, parents, the Policy Council, the governing body and others in the community	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
We implement a well-defined, clearly understood system for child screening, and we...	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	We understand that the National Reporting System (NRS) supports the requirements of the 1998 Head Start Act and President Bush's <i>Good Start, Grow Smart</i> initiative, and we...	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
– use a standardized, valid, reliable tool(s) for screening	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	– understand that the NRS will add to the national picture of Head Start that includes information from the PRISM program monitoring, the PIR, and ongoing research such as FACES and the IMPACT Study	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
– complete screenings within 45 days of enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	– know that the NRS will NOT replace our local ongoing assessment or local outcomes reporting	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
– make timely referrals, as necessary, based upon screening results	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	– understand that children with disabilities will be included in the NRS and that, when necessary, accommodations will be made	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
We use a systematic approach for ongoing observation and assessment of children's progress, and we...	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	– understand that English Language Learners will be included in the NRS	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
– understand the difference between screening and ongoing assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	– know that local programs will be responsible for assessing the children on the NRS items	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
– use appropriate tool(s) that are compatible with our curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	We are taking leadership in this new effort to strengthen Head Start, and we...	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
– follow all required procedures of the system	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	– are committed to training our staff and to providing ongoing support as they prepare for and implement the NRS	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
– track the progress of children in all eight developmental domains of the Child Outcomes Framework and as reflected in the Program Performance Standards	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	– are prepared to inform staff, parents, the Policy Council, the governing body, and others in the community about the NRS	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
– include assessment of child progress in the 13 Congressionally mandated areas	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	– are looking forward to using the NRS as another management tool to improve our program	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
– plan and implement group and individual curriculum experiences based upon changing knowledge of the children's development and progress	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	– know that change can be challenging and that it also means opportunity—we are positive and ready to move ahead!	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
– work with parents as partners to individualize their child's learning and share information on their child's progress	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
We comply with all requirements outlined in IM-18 and related to the 1998 Congressional requirements for program accountability for child outcomes, and we...	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
– take the information from our ongoing child assessment system (and other sources) at least	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		

Michele Plutro is Staff Assistant and Education Specialist, Head Start Bureau. T: 202-205-8912; E: [mplutro@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:mplutro@acf.hhs.gov)  
Thanks to Marce Verzaro-O'Brien, Director, Region IV, Quality Improvement Center for her earlier writing in the area of child assessment.

## ¿ESTÁN LISTOS PARA EL NRS?

**Observen los puntos siguientes y piensen en la situación específica de su programa y en qué tan preparados se encuentran para instituir el Sistema Nacional de Información Evaluativa. Es probable que los programas se encuentren en distintas etapas. Si han marcado "en proceso" o "aún no" en algunos de los puntos, asegúrense de continuar trabajando en esas áreas. También cerciórense de celebrar sus logros en aquellos puntos en que marcaron "absolutamente".** Por Michelle Plutro

	Absolutamente En proceso Aún no		Absolutamente En proceso Aún no
Usamos un currículo escrito e integral como lo definen las Normas de Ejecución del Programa Head Start, y...	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	analizar el progreso que hayan realizado algunos grupos de niños y el progreso y los resultados observados en todas las áreas del programa;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
- aplicamos el currículo de manera efectiva en las prácticas diarias;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	- estudiamos y analizamos las pruebas derivadas de todas las fuentes como parte del proceso de autoevaluación de nuestro programa;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
- incluimos las experiencias de aprendizaje que se han diseñado para respaldar los 8 dominios establecidos en el Marco de resultados del niño en Head Start, incluidos los 13 resultados exigidos obligatoriamente por el Congreso en materia de desarrollo lingüístico temprano, alfabetización y matemáticas;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	- utilizamos la información a partir de la evaluación de resultados del niño a nivel local y a partir de la autoevaluación de nuestro programa, a fin de mejorarlo;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
- informamos a otros miembros del personal y a los padres sobre nuestras metas en relación al currículo y sus métodos.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	- compartimos los informes sobre "el rendimiento escolar de nuestros niños" con el resto del personal, los padres, el consejo de políticas, el cuerpo directivo y otros grupos de la comunidad.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Aplicamos un sistema claro de entender y bien definido para los exámenes preliminares, y...	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Entendemos que el Sistema Nacional de Información Evaluativa (NRS) respalda los requisitos planteados en la Ley de Head Start de 1998 y en la iniciativa Good Start, Grow Smart (Buen comienzo, buen futuro) del Presidente Bush, y...	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
- usamos una herramienta estandarizada, válida y confiable (o varias) para los exámenes preliminares;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	- entendemos que el NRS pasará a ser una parte integral del panorama nacional del programa Head Start y que incluirá información sobre la supervisión federal PRISM, el Informe de Datos Actualizados del Programa (PIR), y sobre la investigación continua, como lo son FACES e IMPACT;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
- completamos los exámenes preliminares dentro de 45 días de haberse matriculado el niño;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	- sabemos que el NRS NO reemplazará nuestra evaluación local en curso o los informes de los resultados que se hayan generado a nivel local;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
- realizamos remisiones oportunas, cuando corresponde, basándonos en los resultados obtenidos de dichos exámenes.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	- entendemos que en el NRS se incluirá a los niños con discapacidades y, si la situación lo requiere, se realizarán los arreglos que sean necesarios;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Utilizamos un método sistemático para la observación y evaluación continua del progreso de los niños, y...	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	- entendemos que en el NRS se incluirá a los niños que están aprendiendo inglés;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
- entendemos la diferencia entre examen preliminar y evaluación continua;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	- sabemos que los programas locales tendrán la responsabilidad de evaluar a los niños en los distintos puntos de este Sistema Nacional de Información Evaluativa.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
- usamos herramientas apropiadas que son compatibles con nuestro currículo;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Vamos a la cabeza en liderar estas nuevas gestiones para fortalecer a Head Start, y...	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
- seguimos todos los procedimientos requeridos del sistema;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	- nos hemos fijado el compromiso de capacitar a nuestro personal y de entregar un apoyo continuo a medida que se preparan y ponen en marcha el NRS;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
- seguimos sistemáticamente el progreso que han realizado los niños en los ocho dominios de desarrollo establecidos en el Marco de resultados del niño y según lo estipulan las Normas de Ejecución del Programa;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	- estamos preparados para informarle sobre el NRS a todo el personal, los padres, el consejo de políticas, el cuerpo directivo y a otros grupos de la comunidad;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
- incluimos la evaluación continua del progreso que han realizado los niños en las 13 áreas exigidas obligatoriamente por el Congreso;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	- esperamos ansiosos poder usar el NRS como otra herramienta de gestión que nos permita mejorar nuestro programa;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
- planificamos y llevamos a cabo experiencias del currículo a nivel individual y de grupo a medida que vamos adaptando nuestros conocimientos al desarrollo y progreso de los niños;	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	- sabemos que el cambio puede representar un reto, pero que también significa oportunidades y ¡estamos con buena disposición y listos para seguir adelante!	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
- trabajamos como socios con los padres para individualizar el aprendizaje del niño y compartir información sobre los avances que éste haya realizado.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
Cumplimos con todos los requisitos delineados en el Memorándum IM-18 y que se relacionan con los requisitos exigidos por el Congreso en 1998 sobre la responsabilidad funcional de los programas por los resultados del niño, y...	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
- obtenemos la información de nuestro sistema de evaluación continua del niño (y de otras fuentes) por lo menos tres veces al año, con el fin de	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		

Michele Plutro es Funcionaria adjunta y especialista de educación en el Head Start Bureau. Su teléfono es 202-205-8912; su correo electrónico es: [mplutro@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:mplutro@acf.hhs.gov). Nuestros agradecimientos a Marce Verzaro-O'Brien, Directora del Centro para el Mejoramiento de la Calidad de la Región IV, por sus previos aportes en materia de evaluación infantil.



## RESOURCES

Compiled by Nanette Lofaro

Whether you are at the point where you just want to “learn a little more” about child outcomes or you are just “starting out,” having a really good list of resources to draw from is always helpful. Unfortunately, you may not always have the time to search for reports, articles, books, or other materials—or even know where to look. Another problem that you may encounter is discerning whether what you are finding is a “jewel” or “junk.” The resources highlighted in this article will help alleviate some of the guesswork and can serve as a foundation for expanding your knowledge base of materials on child outcomes.

If you need help with resources, please contact the Head Start Information and Publication Center (HSIPC) toll-free number, 886-763-6481, from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. E.S.T., and an Information Specialist will be glad to assist you.

### PRINT

#### THE HEAD START CHILD OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

The Framework is intended to guide Head Start programs in their ongoing assessment of the progress and accomplishments of children, as well as assist programs in their efforts to analyze and use data on child outcomes in program self-assessment and continuous improvement. The Framework is composed of 8 general Domains, 27 Domain Elements, and 100 examples of more specific Indicators of children’s

## WEBLIOGRAPHY

*The following Web sites about Head Start are additional resources for teachers, parents, and administrators*

**1** [www.headstartinfo.org/publications/im03/im03\\_07.htm](http://www.headstartinfo.org/publications/im03/im03_07.htm)

This Web site contains the ACYF-IM-HS-03-07—Head Start National Reporting System on Child Outcomes—issued on June 26, 2003. The IM includes information on training, implementation, and financial support for NRS activities.

**2** [www.step-net.org](http://www.step-net.org)

The STEP-Net Portal is a Web-based tool intended to help users find resources, communicate with members of the Head Start early literacy community, and access tools developed for Mentor-Coach Specialists and Early Literacy Mentor-Coaches. Materials from the Head Start conference for STEP Early Literacy Mentor-Coaches (November 2002) and from the Head Start conference, Promoting Social-Emotional Competence through Mentor-Coaching (January 2003), are available. Some information and resources are in Spanish.

**3** [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/sehub/inform0901.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/sehub/inform0901.htm)

This Web site features the Fall 2001 issue of *The ACF Informer*, the newsletter of the Administration for Children and Families, Southeast Regional Hub. It includes a lengthy discussion of Head Start’s child outcomes initiative.

**4** [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/index.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/index.html)

The Administration for Children and Families, Child Outcomes Research and Evaluation (CORE) Web site contains many full-text reports and information on current research.

**5** [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing\\_research/hs/hs.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research/hs/hs.html)

The Ongoing Research site from the Administration for Children and Families, Child Outcomes Research and Evaluation (CORE) team makes available current research projects by topic, such as Head Start and child care. Projects include large research studies, research consortia (research partnerships), and working groups supported by CORE.

**6** [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing\\_research/hs/impact\\_intro.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research/hs/impact_intro.html)

This Web site features the Head Start Impact Study. This Congressionally

## *Continued from page 31*

mandated, longitudinal study of the impact of Head Start involves 5,000-6,000 3- and 4-year-old children from a stratified, national sample of grantees and delegate agencies. Children in the study will be randomly assigned prior to enrollment to either a treatment group (which receives Head Start services) or a comparison group (which does not receive Head Start services).

**7** [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing\\_research/faces/faces\\_pres\\_papers.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research/faces/faces_pres_papers.html)

*The Head Start FACES (2000): A Whole-Child Perspective on Program Performance—Fourth Progress Report* is available at this Web site. The Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) is a national, longitudinal study designed to examine child outcomes and program quality. In both 1997 and 2000, direct assessments were collected from nationally representative samples of approximately 3,000 children. Teachers, staff, and parents were interviewed; observations of classroom quality were made. Findings from both cohorts of FACES show that Head Start children's social skills improve and that they make more progress than the typical preschool-age child on vocabulary and early writing measures, but still fall short of national averages. Observed classroom quality continues to be good. Higher teacher salaries, use of an integrated curriculum, and parent involvement are linked to child outcomes. Another cohort is being launched in Fall 2003.

**8** [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb2/biblio/index.jsp](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb2/biblio/index.jsp)

The Web site for the Annotated Bibliography of Head Start Research offers a searchable database of lengthy abstracts of excellent research-based articles and reports. This edition of the Annotated Bibliography has over 3,100 entries that span 38 years of Head Start research.

skills, abilities, knowledge, and behaviors. The Framework is based on the Head Start Program Performance Standards, Head Start Program Performance Measures, provisions of the Head Start Act as amended in 1998, advice of the Head Start Bureau Technical Work Group on Child

Outcomes, and a review of documents on the assessment of young children and early childhood program accountability from a variety of state agencies and professional organizations.

(Note that in the Framework, a star (☆) marks the 4 specific Domain Elements and 9 Indicators that are legislatively

## RESOURCES

mandated.) See [www.hsnrc.org/hsnrc/CDI/COF.cfm#top](http://www.hsnrc.org/hsnrc/CDI/COF.cfm#top)

The Spanish version of the *Head Start Child Outcomes Framework* is available on the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Quality Improvement Center Web site at [www.mhsqic.org/spandocs/spandocs.htm](http://www.mhsqic.org/spandocs/spandocs.htm).

A revised *Head Start Path to Positive Child Outcomes*, which includes the *Child Outcomes Framework*, is currently in press. Advance bulk orders are being accepted at the HSIPC warehouse. To place an advance order, send an e-mail to [puborder@headstartinfo.org](mailto:puborder@headstartinfo.org) or call 1-866-763-6481.

### THE HEAD START LEADER'S GUIDE TO POSITIVE CHILD OUTCOMES

This document provides a comprehensive set of instructional strategies to foster children's progress toward the learning and development goals in the *Head Start Child Outcomes Framework*. There are chapters on each Domain and on Adaptations for Individual Children. The Guide is currently in press.

Advance bulk orders are being accepted at the HSIPC warehouse. To place an advance order, send an email to [puborder@headstartinfo.org](mailto:puborder@headstartinfo.org) or phone: 1-866-763-6481.

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Nanette Lofaro **is Deputy Director, Head Start Information and Publication Center. T: 202-737-1030; E: [nanettel@headstartinfo.org](mailto:nanettel@headstartinfo.org).**

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dures, and the reporting mechanisms. We appreciate the contributions from Head Start, early childhood, and research leaders in this unprecedented development of a system to collect and use child outcomes information as a new Head Start management and accountability tool.

In closing, the National Reporting System is a work-in-progress. We continue to consult with experts, Head Start leaders, program staff, and parents as we design, analyze, understand, and use the NRS. We will evaluate pilot efforts to utilize the first year of NRS information along with other sources of information about the quality and outcomes of

Head Start programs. As we build upon the initial experiences with the NRS efforts, we will broaden the measures of child outcomes and accomplishments and develop procedures in other languages spoken by Head Start children.

The Head Start Bureau's commitment is to design and implement the NRS to benefit Head Start programs and the children and families we serve. ■

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Tom Schultz *is Special Assistant to the Associate Commissioner, Head Start Bureau. T: 202-205-8323, E: [tschultz@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:tschultz@acf.hhs.gov).*

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because of concerns about how well the child might perform on the NRS or on other assessments of progress conducted locally or nationally. The progress that Head Start children with disabilities make toward their IEP objectives—even if these accomplishments are not captured in the NRS measures—are important outcomes of their Head Start participation.

#### Communicate with Parents

THE ACTIVE AND INFORMED PARTICIPATION of parents in their child's Head Start experiences requires programs to thoroughly orient parents. This would include clear descriptions of the assessment, how NRS results will be reported and used, and the confidentiality and informed consent procedures that will be implemented. For parents of children with disabilities, this may require some additional attention to assure they fully understand how NRS procedures and results are distinct from the evaluations and progress reports associated with their child's IEP.

#### Communicate with Your Local Education Agency Partners

IN YOUR PROGRAM'S ONGOING COMMUNICATION with your local education agency partners, it would be helpful for your staff to introduce the NRS procedure and goals to the appropriate LEA

personnel.

This is an opportunity to clarify that the NRS will be used to provide information on the progress of groups of Head Start children and will not provide information on an individual child's progress. As described above, ongoing assessment results and the monitoring of progress on the IEP are the information sources for transition planning for individual children.

Explore what your school partners may have underway to improve early reading instruction for preschool children. There is an increased expectation that early, evidence-based interventions can prevent many more instances of reading failure (Snow, Burns, & Griffin 1998). Improving children's early reading success can help more children escape a cycle of frustration, diminished motivation, and poor performance that often results in their being identified as needing special education in the primary grades.

#### REFERENCES

Snow, C.E., S.E. Burns, & P. Griffin, eds. 1998. *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press. Also available at [search.nap.edu/readingroom/books/reading/#sum](http://search.nap.edu/readingroom/books/reading/#sum)

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Jim O'Brien *is Program Specialist, Health and Disabilities Branch, Head Start Bureau. T: 202-205-8646, E: [jobrien@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:jobrien@acf.hhs.gov).*

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# ***Summer Training of Trainers for the Full National Implementation of the NRS***

The training-of-trainers workshops will be conducted in selected cities throughout Summer 2003. Participants will be Head Start staff from each program who will, in turn, train staff at their local program on the NRS procedures. One representative from a grantee or delegate agency with up to 400 children ages 4 to 5 will attend; an additional representative will attend for each additional group of up to 400 children ages 4 to 5. The 2½-day training will focus on the goals of the NRS, the administration of the child assessment, the entering of data into the computer-based reporting system, and suggested techniques to train the local Head Start staff on the NRS. An update on summer training for the NRS is available at [www.esilsg.org/NRStraining/index.htm](http://www.esilsg.org/NRStraining/index.htm). This Web site also contains the June 5 satellite broadcast from the Head Start Bureau about the NRS.

[www.headstartinfo.org/publications/im03/im03\\_07.htm](http://www.headstartinfo.org/publications/im03/im03_07.htm)

This Web site contains the ACYF-IM-HS-03-07—Head Start National Reporting System on Child Outcomes issued on June 26, 2003. The IM includes information on the training, implementation, and financial support for NRS activities.

Improving Head Start ■ The Head Start Outcomes Framework ■ Bilingual Parent/Teacher Tear-Away: Bring on the NRS!

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